Grant of licences for exploration of precious minerals in Andhra Pradesh

2230. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether seven companies have been granted prospecting licences for diamond exploration and other precious mineral in the Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has also plants to step up precious stone mining activities in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, etc;

(c) whether the Union Government is confident that these efforts will yield results and Indian will achieve the world leader status is cut and polished diamonds; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Under Section 10(3) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 mineral concessions, including Prospecting licences are granted by the State Government concerned. However, proposals for prior approval of the Central Government for grant of mineral concessions for minerals specified in the First Schedule to the aforesaid Act originate from the respective State Governments and are processed and disposed of by the Central Government as per the provisions of Section 5(1) of the Act.

Since 1.4.2000, on the recommendations of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh, approval have been given by the Central Government for grant of 5 prospecting licences for diamond and other precious stones. in addition, approvals have been given by the Central Government for grant of 32 reconnaissance permits in favour of seven companies. The details of prospecting licences/reconnaissance permits approved by Central Government in Andhra Pradesh are given at the Statement enclosed. (*See* below)

(b) to (d) The National Mineral Policy (NMP) of 1993 recognised the need for encouraging private investment including foreign direct investment in mineral sector. As per the NMP, mining of 13 minerals (including

diamond), hitherto reserved for exclusive exploitation through public sector has been thrown open for private investment. Any Indian National or a Comapny registered in India can undertake mining operation for diamond and precious stones. The Central Government has been urging the State Governments from time to time to pursue investor friendly policy to encourage investment in mineral sector including diamond and precious stones.

In the last two years besides Andhra Pradesh, reconnaissance permits for diamond and precious stones have been granted in the States of Karnataka, Orissa & Madhya Pradesh. Recently some proposals for grant of reconnaissance permits in the State of Chhattisgarh have also been approved.

So far no diamond deposits or precious stone deposits have been reported in the areas under reconnaissance permits/prospecting licences and further action in the matter will depend on the result of investigations.

Statement

Details of prospecting licences/reconnaissance permits approved by the Central Government in Andhra Pradesh

Sl. No	Name of Company	Minerals	No. of PLs
1.	M/s. National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC)	Diamond	4
2.	M/s. Mines Management (India) Pvt. Ltd.	Diamond and precious stones	1
Sl.No.	Name of Company	Minerals	No. of RPs
1.	M/s De Beers Private Limited	Diamond, gold and associated minerals	7
2.	M/s Phelps Dodge Exploration India Pvt. Ltd.	Diamond and associated minerals, copper, lead, zinc, silver, gold, and barytes.	4
3.	M/s CRA Exploration India Pvt. Ltd.	Diamond & other precious minerals including gold, silver, bismuth and cadmium	4

Sl.No.	Name of Company	Minerals	No. of RPs
4.	M/s. Geo Mysore Services India Pvt. Ltd.	Diamond, gold, copper, lead, zinc, silver, nickel, tungsten, antimony, bismuth, arsenic, cobalt, molybdenum, platinum group of metals.	7
5.	M/s. AMIL Mining India Pvt. Ltd.	Diamond, gold, precious stone and associated minerals.	6
6.	M/s. Anglo American Exploration (India) Pvt. Ltd.	Copper, nickel and associated mineral.	3
7.	M/s. NMDC Ltd.	Diamond	1

Cash reward to soldiers

†2231. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Government of Pakistan gives cash reward to its soldiers for killing jawans and officials of Indian army posted in Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) There are no definite inputs to indicate that monetary rewards are being provided to Pakistan Army soldiers for killing Indian soldiers and officers posted in Jammu & Kashmir.

Use of symbols in Cantonment Board Elections

2232. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) in how many Cantonments the Board Elections are contested on political party symbols and in how many it is contested without political party symbols;

(b) whether the Cantonment Act, 1924 specifies Cantonment Board elections on political party symbols;

(c) if so, whether Government had issued any administrative directions

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.